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ABSTRACT

The study examined a group of third grade students from Kuwait, considered gifted based on their mental ability, to determine if intelligence is a meaningful predictor of gifted behaviors. The gifted behaviors studied were learning, motivation, creativity, and leadership. Three hundred students, their mothers (N=300), and teachers (N=142) participated in the study. The two instruments used in the study were Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices and the Scale of Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students. Eleven students were found to be gifted in all four areas. Results suggest that intelligence alone is not a sufficient predictor of gifted behaviors. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed. Includes 12 references. (JDD)

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Giftedness Phenomenon in the State of Kuwait: A National Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine a group of third grade students, considered gifted based on their mental ability, to determine if intelligence is a meaningful predictor of gifted behaviors. The gifted behaviors included in this study were learning, motivation, creativity, and leadership. Three hundred students, their mothers (N = 300), and teachers (N = 142) participated in the study. Only 11 students were found to be gifted in all four areas. Results suggest that intelligence alone is not a sufficient predictor of gifted behaviors. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Educators and professionals are at odds on methods for identifying giftedness (Shevin, 1987; Tolan, 1987), and even countries differ in their perceptions of characteristics of gifted children (Busse, Dahma, Wagner, & Wieczerkowski,1986). There is agreement that gifted children are special and have special educational needs (Shevin, 1987; Roberts, Kyle, & Mosely, 1982).

The growing awareness of the inadequacy of IQ tests as the sole criterion for identifying gifted children has brought increased recognition of the role teachers and parents can play in the identification and selection process. The IQ tests measure only one of the three components of giftedness, namely, the intellectual ability level of the child. However, possession of superior abilities alone is not sufficient to indicate giftedness, and for more accurate identification of children who have the potential for gifted behaviors, it is necessary to obtain information on the other two components: task commitment and creativity (Renzulli, 1986). The fact that many characteristics of giftedness are demonstrable only in the behavior of students means that teachers and parents are the ones who have the opportunity to assess these characteristics. Teachers, support groups, combined efforts of parents and teachers, and educated parents offer much needed supplementary mechanisms and skills (Edwards, 1985; Sherman, 1982; Wolf, 1987; and Riggs, 1984) to provide gifted children with a rounded

treatment of their specific requirements.

In Kuwait, for the age group that participated in this study, the child is considered highly gifted if his/her percentile IQ score exceeds 95, gifted if it is between 90 and 95, and average gifted if the score is between 75 and 89. The primary purpose of this study was to examine a group of students, considered gifted based on their IQ scores, to determine if the relationships between their intelligence level and gifted behaviors indices were significant. The gifted behaviors investigated in this study were learning, motivation, creativity, and leadership.

Methodology

This was descriptive survey research of an exploratory nature. The population included all third grade students identified as gifted, based on the Non-Language Intelligence Test and school records, by Kuwait Ministry of Education for the 1987-88 school year (N = 2930). These students represented approximately 9% of the 31,917 third grade students in Kuwait. The population was stratified by gender, and 150 boys and 150 girls were randomly selected to participate in the study. The 300 students ranged in age from eight years + six months to eight years + 11 Months. Mothers of the third graders (N = 300) and their teachers (N = 142) were also included in the study.

Two instruments were used in the study. Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices (SPM) was used to measure mental ability of

the students (Raven, Court, & Raven, 1983). This test was standardized for use in Kuwait in 1980 (Department of Psychological Services, 1980). The SPM measures performance on non-verbal reasoning by requiring the completion of a pattern or figure with a missing part.

The Scale of Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS) was used to measure the learning, motivation, creativity, and leadership characteristics of the students, as reported by their mothers and teachers (Renzulli, Smith, White, Callahan, & Hartman, 1976). The SRBCSS was translated into Arabic, its content validity was assessed by a panel of experts, and its reliability was estimated by employing the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (the reliability coefficients for the four subscales ranged from .86 to .94). The SRBCSS contains 37 items (learning - 8 items, motivation - 9 items, creativity - 10 items, leadership - 10 items), and respondents are requested to express the extent to which each of the characteristics are observed on the child (1 = seldom/never, 4 = almost all of the time). The measured operational definition for each of the subscales was the sum of the respondents' responses to the items which measured the construct.

Results

The SPM percentile scores of the students were used to classify them into the three levels of giftedness explained

above. The majority of the third graders were average gifted (58.3%), followed by gifted (32.7%), and highly gifted (9.0%).

The means and standard deviations for the four dimensions of the SRBCSS are summarized in Table 1. Parents' ratings were significantly higher than teachers' ratings on all four dimensions ($p < .01$). According to Renzulli et al (1976), "those students who deviate markedly upward from the mean should be considered likely candidates for placement in a program of activity that is designed to enhance particular abilities" (p. 17). For the purpose of this study, students who scored one standard deviation or more above the mean, based on mothers' and teachers' data combined (i.e., the grand means), were considered gifted in particular activities. Based on the above criterion, only 11 out of 300 third graders, who had been considered as gifted based on their SPM scores, were found to have the potential for gifted behaviors in all four areas of learning, motivation, creativity, and leadership. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients between the SPM scores and learning, motivation, creativity, and leadership indices were .22, .15, .20, and .21, respectively. Although all the correlation coefficients were significant at the .01 level, their practical significance was low.

Insert Table 1 About Here

Discussion

Results of this study suggest that intelligence alone is not a sufficient predictor of gifted behaviors. The children who had been identified as gifted by the Ministry of Education in Kuwait, using the Non-Language Test and school records, also scored above the 75th percentile on the SPM, thus confirming their high intellectual ability. However, the low correlations between the test of intelligence and the four dimensions of the SRBCSS indicate that the two tests are not measuring the same constructs.

If gifted children are identified only on the basis of their scores on measures of intelligence, then children who manifest other aspects of giftedness may be overlooked. Giftedness should be viewed as a multidimensional set of characteristics, therefore, the identification of gifted children should employ multiple criteria.

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Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for the SRBCSS Scales

SRBCSS Scale	Mothers Mean	Mothers SD	Teachers Mean	Teachers SD	Combined Mean*	Combined SD
Learning	23.30	3.68	21.44	4.34	22.70	3.50
Motivation	24.69	3.87	22.87	4.43	24.10	3.54
Creativity	27.53	4.73	24.35	5.48	26.50	4.35
Leadership	33.87	3.85	32.12	4.47	33.30	3.30

* grand means were used for the purpose of classification